1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

764 575 Mother Societies" organized to provide help for member families at the time of a death. Membership in a society is a kind of insurance which helps the bereaved family through the ordeal. The members of a father-mother society stand ready to handle the many tasks which must be carried out for the funeral ritual and burial, and each contributes a sum of money to the family of the deceased. This amount is calculated on the basis of the current cash value of a given quantity of pork.

764 575 156 Usually one or two male members of the society take informal charge of the many arrangements and tell each person just which tasks he should perform. This "organizer" usually is self-appointed and assumes this responsibility "because he likes to run things, regardless of the amount of time and work it involves." The village storekeeper, a member of the Shen *tsu*, is such a man. He is also a part-time farmer, the elected head of the village Farmers' Association unit, and a shaman. He "pushes himself" into many such positions and, although the villagers feel that he is rather aggressive along these lines and not necessarily the most capable person available, they nevertheless accept his leadership since he handles so many unpleasant and time-consuming tasks.

764 621 In addition to those in the father-mother society, almost all the other villagers hold themselves ready to aid a bereaved family. While the members of the society are called upon to do the most time-consuming and hardest work, any villager must be prepared to help. If a death occurs at harvest time, the village farmers may have to postpone the harvesting of the crops, because if a man is requested to participate in and help with the funeral, he can do nothing but accept and do the tasks assigned to him. The time of death is therefore a time of village unity. No matter what feeling may have existed between a villager and the deceased or the members of his family, the villager, if called upon, cannot refuse to help. "One cannot have bad feeling toward the dead."

764 Among the tasks assigned to the helpers are: notifying relatives and friends of the death; constructing an outdoor altar for the funeral ceremony; buying, preparing, and cooking the food which is served to all who participate in the funeral; sewing mourning clothes; and bringing the coffin from Lukang to the village. Villagers also help in digging the grave and carrying the coffin to the cemetery later.

For the most part the members of the family have little work to do, and at most the immediate family may be found helping to make mourning clothes or preparing vegetables for the cooks. Usually, they are kept busy mourning and wailing and greeting relatives and friends who arrive from elsewhere.

[292] During the period of the funeral and attendant rituals, the family of

4:Barnett E-4.5 (1965-1967) 1970 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Sanlei Ts'un

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systems.

If a man were to apply the above approach to a series of beliefs, he would be required to accept and internalize some beliefs which are in direct conflict with others. This does not seem to present the problems it might require of a man socialized in terms of Western culture. That is, there does not seem to be the same strong drive for belief consistency, i.e., construction of what has been termed an integrated personality. Francis L. K. Hsu (1953; 1963) has characterized the Chinese personality as "situation-centered" by which he means that a Chinese reacts to his world as if it were compartmentalized; he possesses a segmented personality. "Principles which are correct for one set of circumstances may not be appropriate for another at all, but the principles in each case are equally honorable. In fact, the good Chinese tends to have multiple standards" (1963:2). "The individual feels no resentment against conforming and no compunction about behaving differently under contrasting sets of circumstances" (1963:2). This great difference in approach has seemingly confused Western scholars.

A man who repeatedly offers one opinion, then changes it to the opposite side and then again reverts to the original position is labeled "insincere" according to Western principles. Liao P'o-li, the forty-two year old son of the man who headed the largest extended family in

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121 Sanlei, told me on many different occasions that he did
771 not believe in ghosts or evil spirits. Nevertheless, I
715 saw him make sacrifices of propitiation to ghosts and evil
181 spirits and after an accidental death in Erhlei, he refused
156 to come alone to my house to chat as long as he had to pass the body which was laid out in the courtyard. He said he was afraid of the evil spirits which were sure to be lurking near the body. When I argued that he claimed he did not believe in spirits and ghosts, he told me not to be foolish and he would not come until the body was buried. Liao P'o-li was a sincere man who did not believe in spirits in one set of circumstances but did believe in spirits in another. He will continue to oscillate between
121 these positions as situations change. I believe the West-
771 ern scholar is incorrect if he labels China irreligious on the basis of this process. Even though an informant may tell him, "We do not really believe these religious things," the researcher should observe his activities and apply a behavioral yardstick to accurately assess the informant's attitudes.

The fourth and final reason is due to a Western distinction between religion on the one hand and magic or superstition on the other. Gallin points out (1966:232) there is "so complete a mixture of religious and magical belief [in the village he studied] that it is often difficult to determine where one form ends and another begins"